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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COMPENSATIONS OF THE WAR

SIR,—The article by Sydney Brooks on "The New England" in your December number is profoundly suggestive for philosophic thinkers.

Every process and phenomenon in nature is either generative or degenerative. Every force in nature is either creative or destructive. Our best philosophers realize that not only England, but Germany and Russia as well, are going through a most necessary evolution of immeasurable dimensions; and, terrible as the cost may be, they believe it best that the struggle should be carried through to its logical end. Each of these great dominant peoples has been cursed by most fatal errors of ideal and philosophy. The error of Great Britain is social; that of Germany is political and social; while that of Russia is religious and social. But in their genesis they all have the same origin, present the same problem, and must have the same solution.

As in all historic past times, the priesthoods, with their monopoly of learning, have been most responsible for the errors and false ideals of society, so Christianity was in its beginning a concretion of many theories of former times, blended with certain new reactions from the more repulsive features of the phallic, or sex, worship of the Jews; and, like all blinded human reactions, these went to an opposite extreme that has been the most destructive of all priestly inventions. To this error may justly be charged all of the worst discords of society, from personal vice to the present war. I refer to the dogma of contempt for the gender sense,—the spring and source of all of the family loves and affections,—and the idea that all of the impulses, emotions and organisms of the gender sense and generative system should be despised, degraded and strangled. The great Catholic Church still teaches that celibacy is a nobler form of life than the marriage state. Nearly all of the Protestant cults also treat these fundamentals of life in such a way as to keep the minds of their believers filled with ideas of embarrassment, vice, immodesty, vile conversation, and degenerating habits.

So long as people live in actual contact of their feet with the earth, the healing power of the earth constantly tends to correct this destructive influence, but as the population condenses into cities and factory towns, this healing or recuperating influence is largely lost, and the increasing tide of degeneracy works its vicious effects almost unchecked.

Human scientists agree that not one in ten of the people now living in our large cities will ever have a normal virile grandchild unless these false

ideals of society are corrected, and the recognition and teaching of natural law in the processes of human life are made a part of our system of education.

This awful condition is almost as true, by the way, in our own country as in the cities of Great Britain and Europe. Our cities are a great consuming maelstrom that is draining the best blood from the country, and sinking it in vice, disease, and social discords. Among the sporadic products of this unnaturalness may be noted the discordant marriages and resultant divorcees in our own country; the caste and antagonism of classes in Great Britain; the abnormal glorification of the nation and of war, and of contempt for the individual and for humanity at large in Germany; and the darkness of ignorance and superstition, drunkenness and official cruelty in Russia.

A useful statement of evils should point to their correction. In the law of nature, every thing in life is of the same divine origin, and entitled to perfect respect. If it has proved useless to preach that we were created in "the image of God," it is still true that each human is a concretion of all the substances and intelligences of the universe, and is thereby related in blood and psychic fellowship to every other human.

If we had a true philosophy of life, and a sensible system of character analysis, culture and education, we would teach every boy and girl, by individual analysis, the three vital problems of life: how to live; how to love; and how to labor. In other words, how to develop and preserve all of his physical forces; how to love so that his children will not be scrubs, and he will not need or want divorce courts—and, finally, so that he shall become an efficient factor in working out the function of the human race.

How to restore lost human respect is, then, the problem of all, and every change noted by Mr. Brooks as working out with such painful travail in Great Britain, and every change toward human brotherhood noted by good observers in the other fighting nations, will, we hope, work out such a better and more natural system of human relations as will make an end of war, and of national or racial hatreds,—at least among the higher nations of the Earth. But shall we dare to wish the war to end until all of those fatal ideals of life are melted in common blood, and the time is ripe for the Divine law of human harmony to exercise its dominion over the world?

In our Civil War we endured ten times as much misery, loss of life, and destruction of property in proportion to the white population as the British empire has to the present date, and yet we made more progress during those terrible four years in strength, in modernism, and in liberation from the religious and social superstitions of the dark ages than we probably had during the fifty years before. May we not hope that the warring peoples of Europe will be equally compensated for their sufferings by progress in democracy and humanity?

JOHN E. AYER.

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IN PRAISE OF BROMIDES

SIR,—In the November REVIEW you join in discussing the most discussed of all undiscussable subjects. In your editorial, "The Decline and Fall of Culture," you write, to be sure, in "lighter vein," but that doesn't